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CONTINUATION OF SEMINAR ON "PROPOSAL FOR AN  
EXPANDING RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN IRAN"  
RECORDED IN USDA GRADUATE SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, D.C.  
January 11, 1956

Chairman: M. L. Wilson

Discussion Leader: Paul V. Maris

- I. Mr. Wilson: You are listening to a recording of a seminar held in the Graduate School of the United States Department of Agriculture on January 11, 1956. My name is M. L. Wilson. I am serving as Chairman of the Seminar. Our discussion leader is Paul V. Maris who completed a tour of duty in Iran for what is now called the International Cooperation Administration and another tour of duty for the Ford Foundation. During these assignments in Iran Mr. Maris assisted with the formulation of a program for carrying out the land reform program initiated by the Shah of Iran and subsequently with plans for the expanding community development project which we are to talk about today.

A previous seminar on this same subject was held here in the Graduate School on November 4, 1955. A recording was made of that seminar also. These two recordings are part of what we hope will be a series on the general subject of Agricultural Extension Service work in underdeveloped countries. They are to be available for use by Colleges, Universities, and other institutions engaged in training leaders for agricultural extension work in foreign countries.

I think we need to establish right now at the beginning of this session some definite connection with our previous seminar. At our first meeting Mr. Maris showed us some very interesting colored pictures of Iran which he had taken there. He followed that with an outline on what he believes to be the principal problems of Iran which have a bearing on agriculture program development. He then came to what we are concerned about most of all, namely, a project entitled "proposal for an expanding rural development program in Iran".

Naturally, it took most of the time at our first seminar for Mr. Maris to cover thoroughly the preliminary points of his outline and do, what you might call, "open this subject up for discussion." There was a little time toward the end of the period for a few questions but none of us felt that there had been enough time to clarify all of the issues involved and to get a concensus of the views of the seminar group on the points brought out by our discussion leader. That is why this second seminar has been arranged.

Several of the persons who were present at the first session are unavoidably absent today. First of all, the student auditors are not here. Dr. J. T. Sanders who was one of our group is on an official mission to South Carolina. At the present time Mr. Richard Bernhart of the International Cooperation Administration is in Ethiopia for a month. We do have Dr. E. C. Johnson of the Farm Credit Administration with us again and also Mr. Lou Malotky of the Farmers Home Administration. We are particularly fortunate in having a distinguished Iranian visitor with us for today's discussion. He is Mr. Jalil Mahmudi who is leader of a group of Iranian officials who have been studying agriculture administration in the U. S.

for the past four months. Paul, since you knew Mr. Mahmudi better than I do, I wish you would introduce him a little more fully to our fellow panel members and also for the record.

II. Mr. Maris: I am very pleased to do that "M.L." I knew Mr. Mahmudi very well in Iran. He occupied the important position there of economic advisor to the American Agriculture Attaché. That really means "chief assistant." I owe Mr. Mahmudi a special debt of gratitude because he did the major part of the work in preparing a "restricted" report on the distribution of Crown lands in Iran issued by his then Chief Jack Geib. This report was of inestimable value to me when I went to Iran in the spring of 1952 to serve as a consultant to the Royal Commission charged with the responsibility of working out and administering His Majesty's Land Reform Program.

Mr. Mahmudi and I were fellow-members of a Rural Development Seminar in Tehran. We participated in many exciting discussions. Mr. Mahmudi has been a most able leader of the official delegation visiting in this country and I quite agree with you that we are very fortunate in having him with us today, particularly since he and his recent Chief, Agricultural Attaché Mr. Lint, were two of the persons with whom I consulted in formulating early drafts of the rural development program which we are now discussing.

III. Mr. Wilson: Since we want to get Mr. Mahmudi's views on this proposal for a community development project, it might be well for you, Paul, to summarize briefly the proposal itself -- I mean just the highlights of it.

IV. "P.V.M.": Yes, I welcome the opportunity to do that and one thing more. I would like to begin by getting Mr. Mahmudi's reactions to what I have described as the basic agricultural problems in Iran. I stated, Mr. Mahmudi, that Iran, in common with many other underdeveloped countries, has a small ruling class of comparatively wealthy and well-educated people, a small middle class made up of merchants, professional persons such as lawyers, doctors and so forth, and a very large class of poor and illiterate folks engaged in agricultural pursuits and living in villages or traveling about as members of nomadic tribes. I stated that it is difficult to initiate basic institutional reforms in a country with this type of population distribution where control rests so largely in the hands of comparatively few.

Second, I said Iran is handicapped by what might be called a lopsided economy, that is by over-dependence upon agriculture as a source of livelihood and a general lack of industrial development.

Third, there is much under-employment and unemployment in the 43,000 villages of the country.

Fourth, there is a lack of adequate land and water resources in relation to the number of people dependent upon land and water for their livelihood.

Fifth, there is a lack of agriculture credit at reasonable terms. Interest rates - altho they may be indirect and concealed, are outrageously high.

Sixth, there is a very low producing power and very low purchasing power among the masses of the people. This contributes to national impoverishment.

Seventh, the farmers or villagers who constitute around 3/4ths of the population have very little political influence.

Now I would like to ask you, Mr. Mahmudi, if this misrepresents the situation in Iran in any way, if you disagree with any of these points, and if you have other things in mind that ought to be added.

V. "Mr. Mahmudi" I think your list of agriculture problems, Mr. Maris, is a very good one and there is nothing in the list with which I disagree. It might be well to add that there are some other things, some limitations, and some customs among the people of Iran that tend to slow down progress. I have in mind such things as a general lack of education. Uneducated people tend to be superstitious. They tend to spend more than reasonable amounts on weddings, festivals, and so forth. They sometimes use drugs or opiates to alleviate suffering when medical care is not available, or to drown their sorrow or discouragement.

VI. "P.V.M." Thanks very much, Mr. Mahmudi — The points you mention are certainly important. Now, before proceeding to a summary of the community development plan, I should like to remind the members of the seminar that I expressed the view that what I have described as agriculture problems in Iran are also, to a considerable degree, present in such countries as Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, India, Jordan, and Lebanon. Iraq has rather abundant land and water resources if properly developed and distributed but at the present time many cultivators in Iraq are struggling along with inadequate land and other resources. You have done a lot of traveling around the world -- Ed. Johnson. Would you care to comment on how widespread these problems are that we are talking about?

VII. Ed. Johnson: It would be a mistake to assume that all countries have these problems, which Paul mentioned, with equal severity. I have visited countries in Southeastern Asia, including Korea, Formosa and the Philippines, Indo-China and Thailand, and South American countries in the capacity of a consultant on agricultural credit problems. The population structure in most of them is roughly similar to that described in Iran. Some of these countries, however, particularly South American countries and the Philippines, have a good deal of undeveloped and presently unused agricultural credit facilities are woefully inadequate in practically every country I visited.

However, I am pleased to mention that several countries are giving consideration to improving credit facilities for farmers. The Philippines have made substantial progress in this respect in the last 3 years. With the assistance of Government funds and supervision, a large number of farmer cooperative associations have been organized in the Philippines. These associations perform three major functions: first, they provide supplies for farmers; second, they market rice and other farm crops for the members; and third, they make credit available to the members for production and other purposes. With these facilities farmers are obtaining loans at reasonable rates and have the opportunity also — with the assistance given by the cooperatives — to materially increase their incomes and their standard of living.

VIII. Mr. Wilson: I think we have a list of problems before us that are present, to a greater or lesser degree, in many countries in which we are attempting to extend technical aid. Unfortunately I fear, they are present "to a greater extent" rather than "lesser" in many countries. So, if we have in this project which we are going to talk about, an approach worked out which promises to accelerate social and economic progress in Iran, it is quite probable that similar techniques may be helpful elsewhere also. I suggest that you go ahead now Paul and briefly review the highlights of this plan which Iran is now said to be getting underway.

IX. Mr. Maris: Very well, I shall attempt to do so. As a means of being specific I should like to invite your attention to this wrist-watch of mine. It looks very much like all other wrist-watches. But whether it is a good watch or bad watch depends, not on what you see externally, but on the works inside. The same holds true for "rural community development blocks." It is an expression that might mean much or it might mean little. What goes on inside a development block is what counts. And I would like for each of us to refresh his memory on just what activities are proposed within a development block and how it is proposed to get them underway. Will you please note carefully the numbered paragraphs on pages 2 and 3 of the mimeographed project which I placed in the hands of seminar members. They read as follows:

1. Conducting a study of the human and material resources of each village within a development block to determine how much arable land and how much water are available or can be made available, how big farms should be to support the level of living set as a goal, how many families can be supported in village industries or non-agricultural pursuits, and how many families should be transferred to other areas where employment opportunities will be more favorable. (Fortunately this can be done in Iran.)
2. Aiding the surplus families which are relocated to become successfully established in new areas. Typically this will involve building new communities in reclamation areas such as Khuzistan, Moghan Steppe, or Gorgan. In such cases villages must be properly located and built, highways constructed, farms of proper size laid out, etc. No attempt will be made to transfer surplus families until satisfactory places have been created for them to live and support themselves.
3. Aiding competent cultivators who remain in the original block (whether they be owners or tenants) to attain security of tenure on farms large enough efficiently to utilize available labor and support an adequate level of living.
4. Helping the farmers in new or old villages to organize multi-purpose cooperative associations to serve groups of villages. These multi-purpose cooperatives will perform purchasing, marketing, and service functions and will act as agents for a central bank in extending long-term and intermediate credit to individuals and groups of farmers. They will extend short-term credit to individual farmers through local credit societies.

5. Assisting farmers in organizing cooperative credit and savings societies for the primary purpose of extending short-term credit at the village level.
6. Helping the villagers analyze and solve agricultural, health, and educational problems. This includes the whole field of technical aid with which we are all familiar.
7. Sponsoring the development of village industries designed to reduce unemployment and under-employment in rural areas and achieve a better balanced economy for Iran.
8. Helping villagers make full use of the opportunities available under the village council program for participating in local self-government, improving their housing and their community facilities and services.
9. Recognize the multi-purpose village worker, aided by supporting technicians, as the motivating force in this community development undertaking. He functions as the connecting link between the villagers who need assistance and the Ministries of Government and other agencies which are prepared to render such assistance.

Not I think is the time for Mr. Mahmudi to express his views on this development block idea.

- X. "Mr. Mahmudi" Well, as Mr. Maris told you a few minutes ago, I did have an opportunity to study this project and offer suggestions with respect to it when it was in the process of being developed. Some things can be said very positively in its favour. The first is that it is centered in the local community where I think it is absolutely necessary to begin if we are to achieve any real substantial and lasting progress. In the second place, it is a self-help program, which of course means that the villagers themselves not only decide what they want to do to improve their condition, but they will have a large part in carrying out the program. Another thing which I think is important, that is that it contemplates beginning in a small way and expanding as rapidly as possible. It is not practical for Iran to try to start something like this in all of her 43,000 villages at once. We do not have the trained personnel to carry on the program nor the finances to meet the costs involved but we can start in a few selected areas which are called "Development Blocks" and increase the number of such Blocks, year by year, as funds can be made available and as leaders and field staff can be trained.
- XI. Mr. Wilson: Thank you very much for that good statement, Mr. Mahmudi. You have told us about the blocks and I am frank to say that I am impressed favorably by this kind of approach but I would like to ask to what extent this plan is based on experience and to what extent it is based on what might be called an idea that has not been actually put into effect.
- XII. Mr. Maris: I can throw some light on that point, "M.L." This approach was tried out successfully in 12 villages in the Varamin, Plaines area some 30 miles East of Teheran where the crown lands were first distributed. A dozen village supervisors, trained for rural school work by the Near East Foundation, were given additional special training and assigned to

these villages to help the villagers. I think the records will support the statement that progress in these 12 villages has been greater than any other like number of villages in Iran. By progress I mean increases in agriculture production, better marketing, a bigger income for the farmers, improvement in sanitary conditions, schools and so forth. Then of course, as you well know, India has been carrying on a community development program for about four years now. It is much greater in scope than the one we are talking about in Iran. While there are differences between the two programs, there is also much similarity between them. I would like also, in this connection, to refer to a report entitled "Report on Community Development Programs in India, Pakistan and the Philippines by Harold S. Adams, Prof. of Public Health, Indiana University Medical School, George N. Foster, Prof. of Anthropology, Berkeley, Paul S. Taylor, Prof. of Economics, University of California. It is an excellent report sponsored by and available from the I.C.A. We of course did not have this report when the Iranian plan was developed but since it is now available I might mention it as evidence of the fact that the principles we are talking about have been subjected to tests elsewhere.

- XIII. Mr. Wilson: I would like now to raise a question which was suggested by a conversation I had with a visitor from one of our cooperating countries. As he was preparing to return to his home country, he said to me that "these agricultural improvements I have seen are all very good but I am going home without much encouragement because we cannot get any place without land reform in our country, we cannot have land reform without revolution." My question is, was this man right? I certainly hope not, but I raise the question for discussion. How much of a point did this man have?
- XIV. Mr. Maris: Well, revolutions are precarious undertakings. They are almost sure to be destructive of life and property—and there is no certainty that they will produce the desired result. It is my belief that this kind of project can be launched in many countries without a revolution. That is another way of saying that there are good reasons for believing that we should place our dependence upon evolutionary processes. First of all, it is well to point out that this community development approach does not in fact jeopardize the status of the land owner. It is the belief of the persons who formulated the plan that it will work in villages owned by large land owners, it will work on endowed properties, on public domain and on privately owned land. Many wise land owners can, I believe, be convinced of the merit of this plan and also convinced of the futility of opposing all changes designed to help poor folks on the land. This rural development block operation can really create a bigger pie to cut so that both the cultivator and the land owner will, each, get a bigger piece. I would like, however, for Mr. Mahmudi to express his views on this point of evolution versus revolution.
- XV. Mr. Mahmudi: Well, our country has already taken some steps and has gone far enough I think to prove that at least a good start can be made without a revolution. Our recent Prime Minister, Mr. Zachedi, appointed a commission to study this community development project. The commission reported favorably upon it and the Prime Minister recommended that it be put into effect. Our present Government has provided some money for making a start. For these reasons I fully agree with Mr. Maris that in Iran evolution is much better and much more likely to succeed. Do you have a question, Mr. Johnson?

XVI. Ed. Johnson: We are all interested in the practical aspects of this whole matter. Based on experience in Iran, I would like to know what some of the principal problems have been in getting this Development Block program under way.

XVII. Mr. Maris: That certainly is a good question. I would mention first of all the difficulty of getting an administration setup that will result in bringing all of the different agencies of the government into a desirable working relationship in carrying out this program.

In the second place, it is sometimes difficult to get the necessary enabling legislation for such a program before there has been a convincing demonstration of its value.

Third, for the same reason, capital is hard to command at the outset. Everything has to be done more or less on faith.

Fourth, I am going to use a military term, - "logistics". What that really means so far as community blocks are concerned, is coordinating the training program with the administrative and operating program. It is futile to organize blocks that are not supplied with trained multi-purpose village workers, supervisors, and technical back-stoppers in agriculture, education, health, and so forth.

Fifth and last, although it may seem paradoxical to say so, it is often necessary to curb a desire to expand a program like this too rapidly. It is hard to get it started but when it is started everybody wants in on it. Political pressure is exerted to go ahead when trained leaders are not available and credit is not adequate and so forth. This greatly jeopardizes the success of the program and many actually destroy it.

XVIII. Mr. Wilson: You mentioned the matter of over-all administration, Paul. This reminds me again of the relation of the extension organization to this whole program of community development. I would like to clarify in my own mind just what the relation of extension service is to that program.

XIV. Mr. Maris: Well, if I could have my way about it personally, I would have the extension service assimilate this whole community development block system. Over and over again in Iran I used the expression that the multi-purpose workers in the villages, who are catalytic agents inside the development blocks, ought to be the "fingers of the extension service.". Now I must admit that since the program inside the blocks involves health, education, engineering, credit, and many things other than agriculture, it will take some statesmanship to work the matter out so that all parties will find an increased rather than an impaired opportunity for service. I believe it is possible, however. It involves top level administrative action. I think India is working the problem out in a fine way. The solution they have developed will be helpful as a guide to other countries. Iran proposes to set up a community development body at the national level roughly comparable to that which is functioning successfully in India, and I think it is necessary to go further and mention the fact that Mr. Zahedi, deputy Minister of

Agriculture, and in a sense the father of Iran's extension service, is also very much in favor of the development block system and very eager to work out a proper coordination between the two. This can also be said about Mr. Rossi who is presently in Cornell's graduate training school for overseas workers..

XX. Mr. Wilson: I want to get around again to this point of combining what we think of in this country as the Farmers Home Administration technique with an Extension Service technique. You have stressed the importance of this combination, Paul. What are your reasons?

XXI. Mr. Maris: I am quite eager to say something on that point, Mr. Wilson, but first I would like for Mr. Malotky who has been in Iran and who is in the Farmers Home Administration to say something about the importance of supervision credit and adequate land resources in connection with rehabilitating low income farmers.

Lou Malotky: The Farmers Home Administration has some 20 years of experience in helping families become successfully established in farming. Without exception these families had not accumulated sufficient assets to qualify for loans from private or cooperative sources. For the most part these were families who had not owned their farms before and carried the full responsibility for managing their operations.

The Farmers Home Administration has, I believe, demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Congress and the public that a man's credit worthiness is not judged alone by the amount of assets he has accumulated. We have found that perhaps the most important factor, aside from the family's resources—land, livestock, and equipment—to enable them to earn enough income to live decently, to pay their operating expenses, and to retire their debts.

Coupled with Farmers Home Administration credit to acquire adequate resources is sound advice in the management and operation of the farm. We call this combination of credit and technical advice "supervised credit" or "credit backed with advice." Briefly, this involves aiding families in analyzing their credit needs; assisting them in developing a sound plan of operation; visiting them during the year to advise them regarding problems they may be experiencing; and aiding them in reviewing their records at the end of the year to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the past year's business as a basis for planning the following year's operations.

These basic principles of supervised credit, namely, helping families acquire adequate resources and backing credit with sound advice have universal application, particularly in underdeveloped countries like Iran. The rural development program outlined by Mr. Maris recognizes these fundamental principles as a means whereby the Iranian peasants can become credit-worthy owners of their farms. Another point I would like to add is that, in order for a program of this type to be effective, there must exist a feeling of mutual confidence, respect, and understanding between the peasants and those responsible for aiding them in developing solutions to their personal and community problems. This is the kind of working relationship that is being demonstrated by the village workers in the Crown Lands villages at Varamin.

Mr. Maris: Ed Johnson, we all recognize you as a specialist in this whole field of agricultural credit. You are familiar with supervised credit in this country as Mr. Malotky has described it, and you are familiar with credit needs in many countries. Do you feel that supervised credit is the answer in many places?

Mr. Johnson: Yes I do, Paul, very definitely. I have seen a need for supervised credit and have recommended it in a number of countries. The people of those countries are very poor, they have little if any education, their methods of farming are often primitive and unscientific. In order to develop credit worthiness among such cultivators it is necessary to provide them with technical guidance and assistance.

XXII. Mr. Maris: I told you I wanted to say something on this point of combining Extension Service techniques with Farmers Home Administration techniques, "M. L." Both Mr. Malotky and Mr. Johnson have supported my view. I am not suggesting less emphasis on extension method. They are indispensable. I am only suggesting the addition of Farmers Home Administration techniques. In fact, I think some of these techniques fit the problems in countries like Iran better than anything else we have developed in the United States. Again I point out that I can see no reason why supervised credit should not be incorporated along with extension methods in countries like Iran. I know that objection will be raised at once against putting extension agents in the money lending business. I do not propose that such a thing be done. I propose the creation of credit societies of the Cyprus type. Loan committees of these societies perform the loan making and loan collecting functions. The village worker, whom I conceive as a member of the extension staff, would be an educator in this field of credit just as he would be an educator in all other matters of concern to villagers.

XXIII. Lou Malotky: Mr. Maris, when I was in Iran consideration was being given to a proposal to evaluate the effectiveness of the rural development block approach in the Varamin area. Did this proposal materialize?

Mr. Maris: Not fully as yet, Mr. Malotky. The time is ripe, however, for instituting an evaluation program and I believe there is a growing awareness that it needs to be done. I have with me here in my files a copy of the proposal which was drawn up and submitted to the Ford Foundation when you were in Iran. It called for a grant of money to study objectively the results achieved in the 12 Varamin Villages in which Iran's Block system originated. The Minister of Agriculture, then Mr. Adl, and the Head of the Crown Lands Distribution, then Mr. Asadollah Alam, recommended the project. The Ford Foundation gave the matter very sympathetic consideration. It was felt that much of the initiative and a substantial degree of participation, both technical and financial, should be Iranian. It would be fortunate if this project were revived now and gotten under way. It provides a means whereby the fullest use can be made of experience gained as a program goes forward. In this connection I am happy to learn that our Iranian guest of today, Mr. Mahmudi, is formulating plans for instituting a research project on Land Reform in Iran. It is not precisely what you refer to as a continuing evaluation program but it could be a start in that direction.

Mr. Wilson: What is the chance that the Community Development Block program will develop so that problems of women and farm youth will receive consideration, --so that Iran will have some home economics and some 4-H Club type of activities?

Mr. Maris: This is all possible within the frame work of the Development Block system since the people themselves initiate the activities in which they are interested. We don't believe in dictatorships in our country but if by some strange turn of the wheel of fortune I suddenly found myself to be a dictator in Iran I would want to lose no time in extending the benefits of civilization to the mothers of Iran. They enjoy very few of them now. But I think that home improvement is likely to follow along after the other types of improvement we have been talking about. I would like to hear Mr. Mahmudi's comment on this point.

Mr. Mahmudi: It is true, Mr. Maris, that we do have traditions in our country about women's place in the home life and the village life. It would not be practical to attempt to go too rapidly in this field. We are making progress, however. A very fine start has been made in Summer camps for girls. I think there is a very fine chance to start something in Iran like your wonderful 4-H Clubs.

Mr. Maris: Thank you, Mr. Mahmudi. Do you have a comment you desire to make, Mr. Johnson?

XXIV. Mr. Johnson: Getting back again to the matter of problems encountered, Paul, Mr. Mahmudi referred earlier to some customs in his home country that tend to slow things down. Other countries have their cultures also and there are things in their cultures which operate against change. What would you say are some of the factors favoring change and some of the influences standing in the way of change?

XXV. Mr. Maris: First and foremost, Ed, I would call attention to the fact that life is a pretty desperate matter with these almost inconceivably poor folks. They cannot afford to gamble on new ventures. So they have to be thoroughly convinced that the change will be for the better. Next it is true, I think, that the rank and file of people do not have the confidence in their government that results in ready responses. Then there are these practices mentioned by Mr. Mahmudi that are very dear to the people. They will mortgage their future in order to have a wedding as good as the other villagers, or a funeral that is as pretentious.

Then there is the whole question of the status of women which we have just been discussing. The fact that she is kept in the background; that is a retarding influence. But on the other hand, there are some encouraging aspects in the situation. The villagers of Iran do have aspirations for better things. That fact is of tremendous importance. When a village worker gains their confidence, villagers are willing to do things for him as well as for themselves. They like the reputation of being leaders and gaining recognition that comes from growing bigger crops, getting a better house, and so forth.

I am not of course a special authority on this question of what operates for and against change but experience with the villagers has shown that it is possible to arouse their interest and stimulate action under the impact of indigenous local leadership.

I believe our Chairman is indicating that we must bring this discussion to a close. I would like to add one point. Iran started extending technical assistance through a system of regional offices. Each office had its technical staff and it operated somewhat like a county extension staff in relation to a state extension staff. I think there was ample justification for starting that way in that country. I know there was a fear in the minds of some that this Development Block System would be competitive so there was some internal resistance to it. As a matter of fact, however, there was no basis for this fear. The Development Block Program could be started in a small way without interfering with going projects. Future shifts in emphasis could be made wholly on the basis of experience.

Mr. Wilson: Yes, you are correct, Paul, I think the time has come for drawing this seminar to a close. I think it has been a good discussion and that we should have more like it. I would like to serve notice on you, Mr. Ed. Johnson, that we would like to "Pick your brain," as they say, on some of your experiences in working on agricultural credit problems in other countries. We would like to have a seminar or two with you as the discussion leader.

Mr. Mahmudi, it has been a special pleasure to have you with us today. Your remarks have contributed a great deal to the record.

Mr. Mahmudi: I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and on behalf of my colleagues and myself I would like to thank all Americans who have been so very, very kind to us while we have been in your country. Please come and see us when you can.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT

The Development Block program discussed by panel members on the preceding pages was formally inaugurated in Iran by a ceremony held in Namazon, some 30 miles east of Tehran, on January 17, 1956 when a group of graduates of a Rural Leadership Training School there received certificates qualifying them to serve as Dehyars (multipurpose village workers) in the Garmsar and Miandoab Development Blocks which were to be activated immediately. His Excellency Hosein Ala, Prime Minister of Iran, His Excellency Mr. Mehran, Minister of Education and several members of Iran's Majlis (Parliament) participated in the event. There follows a statement made on that occasion by Dr. Ali Moarefi, Director of Development Blocks in Iran's Ministry of Interior and a copy of the "Dehyar Pledge" taken by the young Namazon graduates.

Your Excellency, Mr. Prime Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

In order to fulfill the wishes of His Imperial Majesty, our August Sovereign, with regards to helping our rural population to have a better life, and taking note of the encouraging results of the development activities in the Varamin area, the Block Development Organization has been established

by the Ministry of Interior. This organization will activate and coordinate intensive development activities in blocks of 15 or more villages each in specified areas.

The Block Organization will concentrate its efforts on intensive development programs in a circumscribed number of contiguous villages. From year to year, the number of blocks and the number of villages which will be served by this organization will increase until each Bakhsh (corresponds to county) will have its development block to serve as an example of modern social and economic progress.

We have heard much concerning Point 4 programs, but let me say that this is a Point 5 program. For the five fingers of the right hand there are five cooperating agencies to work together:

1. The Ministries which provide technicians at the block level.
2. The Plan Organization which provides financial support.
3. Point 4 which supports the program with technical assistance and financial support for American technicians.
4. The Near East Foundation's experience in the Varamin operating a pilot block will be basic to our operation. The Near East Foundation, under a contract with the Ministry of Interior, will help expand this successful experiment to other block areas with the help of contract technicians.
5. The Ford Foundation has provided the cost of Dehyar training.

For the five fingers of the left hand we have give goals. The five goals that the five cooperating agencies hope to accomplish within the block areas are:

1. Increase of agricultural production through:
  - a. The expansion of cultivatable lands,
  - b. The introduction of modern agricultural practices and farm machinery,
  - c. The use of insecticides, and
  - d. Improved water use.
2. Increase of rural health through public health and environmental sanitation programs.
3. Increase of knowledge and literacy through fundamental education programs which will complement the current school systems.
4. Increase of farmers' income and more efficient use of income through the establishment of multi-purpose cooperatives and the creation and extension of local village arts and crafts.
5. Increase of community cooperation and self-help through the organization of youth activities, women's programs, and help to village development committees.

The key to the block development scheme lies in the use of village level workers or "dehyars", village boys trained to initiate multi-purpose programs of health, education, and agriculture in the villages. The Ministry of Education has provided us the required number of graduates of the Mamazon Vocational Training School to man our first two blocks. These graduates have completed a two year course; in agriculture and a special three months course in Community Development methods. In addition to their basic Agricultural training they have been given instruction in animal husbandry, farm management, public

health, fundamental education and rural sociology. The dehyars are in reality our front line soldiers. Their duty is to fight rural poverty in all its phases; poverty of knowledge, poverty of modern health practices, poverty of agricultural production, poverty of organizations to provide credit and to market production, and finally, poverty in the appreciation of moral and humanitarian values.

The dehyars are responsible for finding solutions to this overriding problem of poverty. They are in one, servants, advisers, and assistants to the villagers.

Since the degree of knowledge and experience of the dehyars cannot be expected to be complete, technical experts from the Ministries in the fields of agriculture, irrigation, animal husbandry, health, education, village industries, rural multi-purpose cooperatives, and women's activities will be stationed at the center of each block or will be detailed from the Block Organization to advise and assist the dehyars in their village development programs. An overall Block Director will coordinate the activities within each block.

The success and progress of the entire Block Administration, after the help of the Almighty God, is dependent upon the support and enthusiasm of the Ministries concerned.

With these fine young dehyars now present here we shall activate the blocks of Garmsar and Miandoab and later a sub-block in the Moghan Steppe. We shall start a new dehyar training class at Mamazon at the beginning of Farvardin which will last nine months. Next year at this time we shall be able to activate seven more blocks in Khorasan, Baluchistan, Khuzistan, Sistan, Rezaiyeh, and Kermanshah. For the time being, blocks will be established primarily in Public Domain villages.

His Excellency, the Prime Minister, is now requested to allow the dehyars to give their dehyars' pledge. Afterward the dehyars will be accorded the honor of receiving their teaching certificates and their dehyari certificates from their Excellencies the Ministers of Education and Interior.

#### THE DEHYAR PLEDGE

To the Glorious Quran and to the honored flag of my country, Iran and to whatever I hold sacred I pledge:

To hold myself firm and strong against every temptation which should weaken my will to serve truthfully my King and my country.

To use all my energy, sincerely and wisely to improve the living conditions of my fellow countrymen.

To make the honored land of my forefathers an invincible stronghold wherein a happy life is secured for my children and myself.

O God, I am devoting my soul, my heart and my hand to this service. Guide me and help me to succeed.

